

**Bureau of Land Management**  
Northwest California Resource Advisory Council

Field Tour and Meeting  
Thursday and Friday, July 26-27, 2012  
Geyserville, California

**Summary Minutes**

**Thursday, July 26**

Council members and BLM staff toured recently acquired BLM lands at the Cedars of Sonoma near Cazadero. They discussed the resource values that will drive the BLM's management, which will focus primarily on resource protection. In addition to geological features, the area contains eight plant species unique to the area. Public access to the area is by arrangement with the BLM.

**Friday, July 27**

**Opening Business**

Attendance:

Category one: Stan Leach, Dennis Possehn, Eric Lueder. Absent: Bob Warren.

Category two: Ryan Henson, Bob Schneider, Rondal Snodgrass, Michael Kelley.

Category three: Shirley Laos, Tony Shaw, Kendall Smith. One vacancy.

BLM Staff: Acting Northern California District Manager Lynda Roush (also Arcata field manager), Central California District Manager Este Stifel, Redding Field Manager Jennifer Mata, Ukiah Field Manager Rich Burns, King Range NCA Interpretive Specialist Rachel Sowards-Thompson, Northern California Public Affairs Officer Jeff Fontana, Central California Public Affairs Officer David Christy.

Approvals:

The agenda for the meeting was approved. The agenda was adjusted to accommodate a working lunch. Bob Schneider asked that future agendas have time for RAC member topics, and requested a pre-meeting member poll for agenda topics. The minutes from the February meeting were approved with one addition: During the aquatic study item, Tony Shaw commented that there is scientific data supporting the benefits of livestock grazing. Bob suggested that the BLM record attendance at field trips in addition to the meeting. Lynda encouraged members to make every effort to attend the field trips.

## **Field Trip Recap**

Rich Burns briefly recapped the acquisition history of the transfer of the Cedars of Sonoma parcel into public ownership and BLM management. Lynda noted that the selection of the BLM to manage the parcel reflects improving public trust in the agency's abilities.

In summary:

- The parcel is 520 acres with neighboring historic mine sites that stayed in public ownership. The 520 acres is the core of the Cedars of Sonoma. The field trip covered about a tenth of the parcel.
- The surrounding area is managed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The new acquisition is part of the ACEC and has its own management plan. It will be part of a new ACEC management plan.
- There is no legal public access, only BLM administrative access. There is public access to Austin Creek State Park, which is adjacent, and negotiations are underway for hiking trail access from the state park into the BLM Cedars parcel. There is no projected timeframe. Until then, public access will be on request and under BLM escort. There is a total of 2,300 acres of public lands in the Cedars. All is landlocked.
- BLM owns the property in fee. The purchase price was about \$420,000, with funding primarily from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, with additional funds from the California Coastal Conservancy and the Save the Redwoods League.
- Access can be arranged by visiting [friendsofthecedars.org](http://friendsofthecedars.org).
- For the future the area will be managed for habitat conservation and scientific research.

## **Management Reports**

### **State Director's Report:**

Lynda Roush presented an update on behalf of State Director Jim Kenna:

- Leadership Team in Washington/State Office: BLM Director Bob Abbey retired May 31, 2012. Associate Director Mike Pool assumed the Acting Director role beginning June 1.
- Legislative – Just five months remaining in the 112th Congress. Focus still remains on jobs and the economy. It continues to be a busy summer for the California delegation as they prepare for elections. We expect some changes in Congressional districts in the

Northwest part of the state with Congressman Herger retiring and the redistricting of the new District 01.

- **Hill Visits Recap** - The State Director recently completed his annual trip to Washington to brief members of Congress. Jim Kenna met with 13 members/staffs of the California delegation including Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Representatives Herger (CA-2) and McClintock (CA-4). Jim emphasized BLM-CA priority issues (new energy frontier, sage grouse conservation, economic benefits to communities and America's Great Outdoors. He also discussed BLM-California's emphasis on sustainability, heritage and community. Overall he received positive feedback about BLM-California and the good work by field offices and their many partners.
- **Budget** – The FY2012 funding level for BLM-CA was \$1,127,839 million compared to the FY2013 request of \$1,127,335.
- **BLM Priorities:** Our priorities continue to be renewable energy and America's Great Outdoors, including the National Landscape Conservation System, youth initiatives and recreation. Sustainability, Heritage, Community.
- **Wild Horse and Burro** – Adoption season is underway. An adoption in Sacramento earlier this month was well-attended, received positive media coverage and resulted in the adoption of seven animals.
- **Promoting Economic Growth** BLM-California is an engine of economic activity and raises more revenue each year for American taxpayers than it spends. Special areas bring tourism dollars to local communities, and royalties for commercial uses of public lands amount to millions of dollars each year.
- BLM-California brings in \$117 million in oil and gas royalties, \$1.8 million from wind projects, and \$8.6 million from geothermal projects statewide each year.

### **District Manager's Report:**

Lynda Roush noted:

--District Manager Nancy Haug is on a detail to Colorado as acting associate state director. Lynda will be acting DM during her absence which will be through August.

### **National Landscape Conservation System**

Rachel Sowards Thompson, interpretive specialist from the King Range National Conservation Area, led the RAC through an exercise to develop comments on a draft strategy for the California units of the National Landscape Conservation System. The California strategy will tier to the national strategy, available online.

She provided background:

NLCS was created in to conserve nationally significant landscapes managed by the BLM.

- The system was proposed by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt in the wake of several national monument designations by President Clinton and several Congressional designations in 2000
- Congress codified the NLCS in 2009.
- It includes wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, WSAs and others, totaling nearly 28 million acres.
- In Northern California, key units include the King Range National Conservation Area, the California Coastal National Monument, Headwaters Forest Reserve, wilderness areas in all three field office jurisdictions and wild and scenic river reaches

The RAC viewed "The Geography of Hope" video about the NLCS, and began a discussion about items that should be considered in the California draft strategy.

The national 15-year strategy was developed at the NLCS summit in Las Vegas in 2010. California is now working on a draft strategy that will tier to the national strategy. The state held an NLCS workshop last month to begin work. Today's RAC suggestions will add to that work. Rachel suggested the RAC's most important contributions would be in partnerships and volunteers.

Rachel noted California's draft strategy will be developed under four theme areas:

- Ensuring conservation of values
- Collaboratively managing the NLCS as part of a larger landscape.
- Raising awareness
- Building on the BLM conservation commitment

*Action: The RAC unanimously approved the following suggestions for inclusion in the draft strategy:*

***Theme Three: Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of NLCS***

***Goal B: Advance and Strengthen Partnerships to Facilitate Shared Stewardship and to Advance the Relevance of the NLCS to communities of interest and place.***

- *Grant funding (Ryan, Rondal). Appeal to the private sector for contributions or in kind matching contributions. Example: National Forest Foundation matching grant programs. Corporate sponsorship should be considered*
- *BLM should assign a staff person to coordinate volunteers and projects.*
- *Strengthen communications.*
- *Continue ongoing relationships with RACs.*
- *Identify barriers to partnership formation and work toward solutions.*

- *Talk to stakeholders associated with working landscapes to determine their needs and the best ways to keep them involved. The groups will differ by NLCS unit.*
- *Bring stakeholder groups together to share ideas.*
- *Reach out to underserved communities.*
- *Involve stakeholder groups in recruiting interns for project work or other needs. BLM needs project coordinators to do this work.*
- *Partner with creative sources in film and technology – video gaming, for example. There is potential to develop games with conservation and preservation messages, for example.*
- *Develop curriculum for use at the high school level connecting nature, beauty, poetry. It would help develop a sense of what the NLCS system is.*
- *Consider a film festival. Encourage people to submit videos about NLCS units. It could generate hundreds of films.*
- *Assign staff to work with communities of interests.*
- *Develop field office level public awareness campaign plans that tier to work plans and budgets. Assign staff responsibility.*
- *Recognize that the mission of NLCS is to build into the vision of the nation the importance of these lands. Volunteer projects are a way to do this.*
- *Develop better web coordination among NLCS areas and volunteer opportunities. Build service opportunities messages into outreach.*
- *Recognize that members of the public have difficulty distinguishing state lands from federal lands. We need to define ourselves better (move to Goal A, branding).*
- *BLM websites need to be updated.*
- *Look for volunteer opportunities to augment the BLM web presence. Wilderness.net is an example that could be expanded to include NLCS units.*
- *Improve the web to be able to use tools like Google Earth to provide more detailed opportunities.*

### ***Goal C: Expand use of volunteers***

- *BLM should consider hiring partnership/volunteer coordinators (address the need to respond to offers of volunteer services).*
- *Use more hosted workers.*
- *Recognize that providing volunteer opportunities is as important as providing recreation opportunities. A change in agency culture might be needed. The volunteer program should receive a higher priority in project planning and implementation than it does now.*
- *Coordinate with volunteer groups during the project planning phase.*
- *Improve staff education about most effective ways to use volunteers.*
- *Integrate volunteers into daily work within NLCS units – not just special projects. BLM should recognize their expertise as value added to the agency staff. Think long term service. Marin County has a successful program that could be a model.*

- *Develop volunteer work plans, including timelines for projects. Include timing for public outreach, considering appropriate lead times and specific project descriptions.*
- *Consider reaching out to retired professionals (engineers, for example).*
- *Consider incorporating corporate sponsors into volunteer projects.*
- *Use Volunteers of California (vo-cal.org) to advertise projects and recruit volunteers.*
- *Involve the users of the resource. Align the wheel, don't reinvent it.*
- *Reach out to seniors in all areas.*
- *Reach out to schools, particularly high school juniors and schools who have project or volunteer requirements for graduation.*

***Other Suggestions:***

- *Consider the people issue and their impacts on natural resources.*
- *Don't refer to Native Americans as "forgotten people."*

**RAC Member Issues**

Eric Lueder: Distributed a handout on the status of OHV funding at the California state level. It summarized funding reductions from gas tax revenue and other issues (attachment). The handout included a spreadsheet on grant awards for BLM field offices. The grants program is reduced by 52 percent for next year across all four grant categories. There was continuing discussion. Bob Schneider noted that properly funded and managed OHV areas are important. By providing riding opportunities, they protect other areas that could be damaged by improper OHV use. It is important that funds be used for OHV needs.

Eric noted that for many jurisdictions grant funds support entire programs. He cited the Mendocino National Forest as an example. He said cuts in state grant funds will have a direct impact on federal lands because grant cuts will force more limited management. Federal lands are an important part of the mix in providing for OHV recreation opportunities.

Bob Schneider: Reported that Tulyome continues to garner support for the proposed Berryessa/Snow Mountain National Monument. The organization supports the special designation proposals at the Stornetta and Point Arena Public Lands.

**Public Comment**

There was no one present to address the council.

## **Field Managers' Reports**

**Arcata Field Office:** Lynda Roush presented a written report in advance of the meeting (attachment). She provided additional information on a land acquisition and addition to the South Fork Eel River Wilderness.

She said planning is underway for developing a mountain bike trail in the Lacks Creek Area.

Rondal Snodgrass complimented the office on the work with East High School in the Lost Coast Headlands area and asked how the school's involvement came about. Lynda said the project was an outgrowth of the outdoor education program in the Headwaters Forest Reserve. The BLM offers curriculum and project ideas as part of its outreach to schools.

Lynda updated the group on the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail; saying about a mile of connector trail is in the planning stage. It would connect the trail to the Shelter Cove Road.

Rondal complimented the Arcata Field Office on the condition of King Range Trails, and asked whether the BLM could work with state parks to improve conditions of trails that cross from the King Range into Sinkyone State Park. Lynda said discussions are ongoing.

Stan Leach reported that Trinity River Lumber was happy to have been awarded the contract with the Mina Commercial Thinning Project

## **Ukiah Field Office**

Field Manager Rich Burns presented a written report. Additionally, he updated the council on the Sites and Mill fires that burned on the Mendocino National Forest and BLM managed lands.

He said the Walker Ridge wind energy project is still being discussed. The project proponent is considering using larger wind turbines. A draft EIS could be released in April 2013, but there is no specific schedule yet.

## **Redding Field Office**

Field Manager Jennifer Mata highlighted her written report (attachment).

## **Socio Economic Strategy**

The RAC reviewed the BLM's draft national socioeconomic strategy developed earlier this year. Members received copies in advance.

Chairman Michael Kelley summarized the document, noting that BLM capability in socioeconomic analysis has declined over the years, while need for the analysis has become increasingly important. This draft strategy recognizes this, and is an attempt by the BLM to increase its capability to analyze socio economic effects of its land management decisions.

Ryan Henson questioned BLM's legal obligations to analyze socioeconomic issues. Lynda Roush noted that the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) mandates consideration of the socioeconomic factors in land use planning. Lynda said that when planning is contracted the issues are addressed.

Central California District Manager Este Stifel said the BLM intends to develop a strategy to ensure that socioeconomic issues are analyzed consistently in land use plans across the agency.

Stan Leach said in the northwest area of California, there have been socio economic impacts from the northwest Forest Plan and which caused reductions in timber harvesting. He said the draft strategy does not get to the point.

*Action: The RAC unanimously adopted the following comments and asked that they be forwarded to the team working on the document:*

- *The strategy should be tied to local communities that are affected by agency actions and decisions. Locals should be hired to complete socioeconomic studies.*
- *There was no clarity until page 14. The document needs an executive summary.*
- *No members of this RAC were interviewed; several members would like to have at least reviewed the oral interviews.*
- *The value of volunteerism should be considered and quantified.*
- *Socio economic expertise is needed as the BLM self analyzes the organization. It is important.*
- *Urban-rural conflicts and needs should be addressed in the final strategy*
- *The document was difficult to read. The narrative should be clarified to make a stronger case for the stated goals and objectives.*
- *It appears that the relevant content is there. A rewrite in more simple terms is needed.*
- *The BLM needs to standardize the socioeconomic analysis process. The document recognizes the need to identify economic benefits and values of activities including recreation.*
- *These topics are important in management of NLCS units.*
- *The BLM can use socioeconomic data to help identify stakeholder groups and the best way to communicate with them.*
- *This type of analysis can be used to help communicate landscape values to various groups.*

- *The BLM needs a consistent data gathering approach regarding visitor use.*
- *The draft should identify a way to put an economic and social value on actions, emphasizing environmental justice, at national and local levels.*
- *The RAC would like to hear a BLM response to these recommendations and a copy of the final strategy.*

*Additionally, the RAC adopted the following recommendations presented by Chairman Michael Kelley:*

- *It appears that the draft socioeconomic strategy contains most, if not all, of the necessary elements to ensure an effective program.*
- *The draft socioeconomic strategy is written in language that is overly technical and utilizes words and phrases that are intended for sociologists and other “experts” within the BLM.*
- *Because of the manner in which it is written, the narrative in Sections 1 and 2 does not make the case for the goals and strategies set out in section 3.*

### **Redding RMP Preplan**

Jennifer Mata explained the use of a “preplan” as the first step in refreshing the Redding Resource Management Plan that was adopted in 1993. She provided a copy of the Caliente Preplan from the Bakersfield Field Office as an example.

The field office hopes to complete the pre-planning process in 2013, with work on the new Redding RMP starting in 2014. She said the current RMP focuses on land tenure adjustments; the revised plan will focus on management of the public land base administered by the office.

Jennifer said management of the Bend ACEC will be a key topic along with wildland urban interface issues (fire), travel route designation and fuels management. Jennifer said existing MOUs should be brought forward and considered. She added that public sentiment toward public land management in the region has changed considerably since the last planning process in the 1980s.

Michael Kelley said trails should be an emphasis area. Redding has become a world class area and that work should be considered.

Jennifer said she hopes to hire a planner on a temporary term to help write the RMP.

Bob Schneider suggested that a meeting schedule and timeframe be included in the preplan.

Ryan noted that all 1993 goals but one have been achieved. He complimented the BLM on that accomplishment. He agreed that the next step is to focus on managing the current holdings.

*Action: The council developed a list of topics to be considered in developing the plan and asked that the topics be shared with members of the Redding Field Office staff:*

*Issues to be considered:*

- *Trails*
- *Include a meeting schedule and timeframe*
- *Lower Clear Creek Greenway component*
- *Wild and Scenic Rivers*
- *Wilderness characteristics/suitability*
- *Distinguish between Lower Clear Creek and Upper Clear Creek drainages*
- *Environmental justice*
- *Socioeconomic values*
- *Proposed projects and budgets (a business plan)*
- *Land tenure changes in priorities because of new trail developments/demands*
- *RAC and community involvement, including provisions to be flexible in meetings (technology where appropriate)*
- *Timber*
- *Relationship to Northwest Forest Plan*
- *T&E species/sensitive species*

*The RAC asked that Jennifer share these topics with members of her staff.*

## **Closing Business**

**Next meeting:** Nov. 1 and 2. Arcata hosts with a meeting on the first day and a field tour on the second day.

**Agenda topics:** Lost Coast Headlands EA, Lacks Creek update, Redding preplan, forestry practices and Northwest Forest Plan, effective work with the BLM, marijuana eradication on public lands by field office.,

The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

*Summary notes compiled by  
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